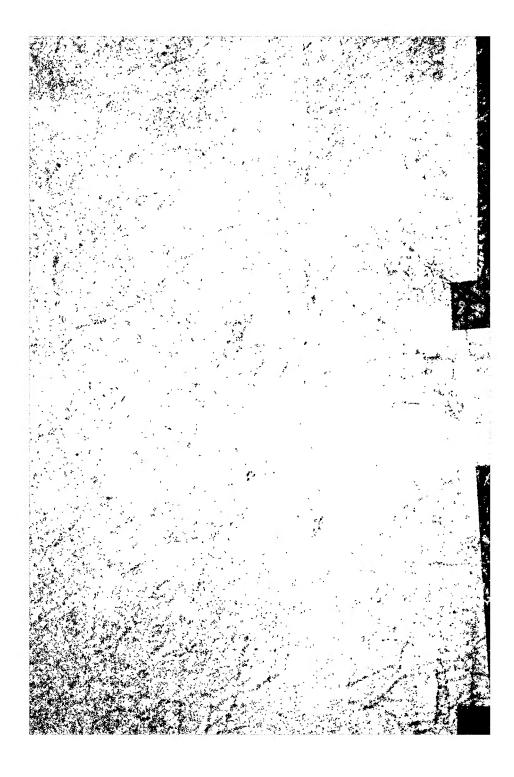
Jón Bjarnason Academy



Winnipeg, 1931



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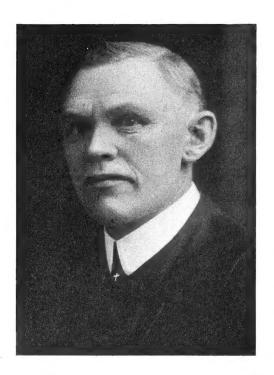
Rev. Jón Bjarnason, D.D.
Father of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod of America and founder of Jón Bjarnason Academy.



WADDERSTANN







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Principal of Jón Bjarnason Academy.

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FOREWORD

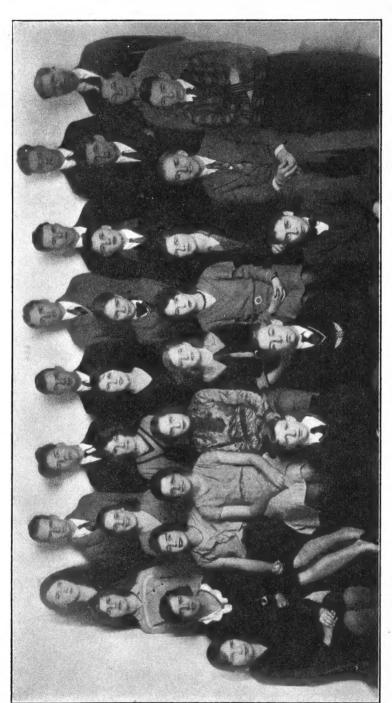
It is to the Rev. Dr. Jón Bjarnason, for more than a quarter of a century pastor of the First Lutheran Church in Winnipeg. that our school owes its origin and its name. It was he who first conceived the idea of establishing an Icelandic Lutheran school with the twofold purpose of inculcating in its students Christian principles, and of providing, particularly for Icelandic students, facilities for studying the language and literature of Iceland. His continued advocacy of the project was substantiated by liberal donations to a fund formed in its aid. The way having been thus prepared, the Icelandic Lutheran Synod founded the Jón Bjarnason Academy in the year 1913. At his death, a year later, Dr. Bjarnason bequeathed to the library of the school a valuable collection of books in the English, Icelandic and Scandinavian languages.

The school offers the regular academic courses of the High School curriculum of the Province of Manitoba in Grades IX to XII inclusive, together with regular instruction in religion in each grade as well as Icelandic language and literature.

Although Icelandic in origin, the academy is thoroughly Canadian in spirit, and welcomes students of all nationalities. In the last four years the enrolment shows a steady increase, and this year the school is filled to capacity having seventy seven students in actual attendance. Three teachers handle the work of the four grades.

In accordance with the principles laid down by the founder of the school we aim in our daily work to develop in our students habits of industry and scholarship, but most of all to mould character by maintaining an atmosphere of Christian influence. And as we believe that the education of our Icelandic young people is incomplete without some knowledge of the language and literature of their forefathers, we consider that our institution, by putting such knowledge within their reach, is filling a real need among our people.

SALOME HALLDORSON, Dean of Jon Bjarnason Academy.



Grades IX. and X. Jón Bjarnason Academy, 1931

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The Aims and Aspirations of Jön Bjarnason Academy

By REV. H. J. LEO, M.A.

Canadian nationality is going through a process of formation. Immigrants from many countries have made Canada the land of their adoption. They have severed many of the ties, political and others, that bound them to their mother-country. They are now Canadians. Here they will live and work, prosper or suffer, rejoice or lament. Here, their children and their descendants, yet unborn, will most likely make their home

They owe to Canada the best they can become and do: clean living, faithful work, an intelligent attitude to public questions, loyal service to high ideals.

As regards the United States, the situation is exactly the same, with the one difference that nationalization has there proceeded further.

The necessity for noble ideals is the same everywhere. Ideals will make or mar the future of any country. On the development of noble ideals depends the greatness of a nation. A man's actions and progress are determined by his ideals. This is equally true of nations.

The foreigners bring their ideals with them already formed. These are the legacy of their homeland and their race. Those ideals find expression in their customs, their literature, their language, their activities, their peculiarities. Their success and usefulness in the new land will depend on their stock-in-trade when they come here and how they react to the new conditions. Most likely they will fill a useful place here, if when they came, they were endowed with the characteristics that were the outgrowth of pure and noble ideals.

Some of the customs of the old land vanish before those better suited to this country. That is as it should be; but the qualities of mind and body, if they were good, should not be given up, but applied with will and vim to the useful tasks necessary to the building up of the new land. Along with their fellow-citizens who were here before them, those of foreign origin put their shoulder to the wheel and willingly give their best to further true progress. Above all it is their duty to give to their new home their finest culture, the purest thoughts,

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the noblest ideals that they have inherited from their fathers.

Here, then, is a place of usefulness for Jón Bjarnason Academy to fill. Our institution is an attempt to keep burning the fires of the highest ideals of the Icelandic race. We do this because we want to be true to ourselves and we want to give to our adopted country the best we possess. Two avenues, we are convinced, lead to this goal. One of these is our racial culture, and the other and more important one, our Christian attitude to life.

Our Racial Culture

Our Icelandic nation, one of the smallest on the face of the earth, owes its origin to the fact that a group of people in Norway left all they had in their homeland, preferring a life of freedom, even on the barren hills of Iceland, to submitting to a despot in the land they loved best on earth.

In the island to which they migrated they established, of their own accord without the slightest urging from any outside power, a government which combined the principles of democracy with respect for law.

Throughout the history of the Icelandic race there appear many examples of heroism, of patient endeavor, of spiritual independence, of love of fredom, of endurance in suffering, and of loyalty to high ideals, so exemplary that they cannot fail to influence the minds of young and old who are willing to give them due consideration.

Should their influence be lost sight of in a scheme of education for the descendants of the race that gave these examples? That seems absurd, particularly when we consider the fact that these treasures are within easy reach of most young people of Icelandic extraction on this continent. The language that they learn from father and mother is the key which only needs a little polishing to unlock the Icelandic classics. If these records can serve to create in young minds a yearning for noble activities is it well to pass them by?

Let it be noted that we possess a literature, ancient and modern, that deserves a better fate than that of being forgotten. Our ancient Eddas and Sagas are masterpieces that will withstand the ravages of time, whether we in Canada have the mind or not to appreciate them. From the standpoint of the historian they furnish most valuable data in mythology. They throw light on the former life of the Teutonic race. They are a real treasure to the man of literary mind. In conciseness of wording and felicity of phrase they have scarcely been surpassed. In mediaeval and modern poetry we have hymns and lyrics that undoubtedly rank with the world's gems of literature. Neither must it be forgotten that the Icelandic language is, in

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every way, closely related to Anglo-Saxon, the mother of modern English. The grammatical structure is almost identical, and the words, in very large numbers, are nearly the same. The value of Icelandic to the student of English cannot be doubted.

We contend, then, that we have cultural values to offer that only need to be examined in order to be recognized, and, further, that our writings are more closely related to British history and the British type of thought than stories or examples gathered from the classic writings of Southern Europe.

This is partially recognized in the United States. "Old Norse" or Icelandic is taught there, for its cultural value, in some of the largest and most influential of the universities.

This example should be followed by the Canadian Universities, particularly that of Manitoba. No other university on the continent is so favorably situated with respect to the pursuit of Icelandic study as the University of Manitoba, because Winnipeg, the seat of the university, is the mecca of Icelanders in America. It is the educational centre for the largest number of Western Icelanders.

The Christian Attitude to Life

It is our firm conviction that religion not only has a place in education but that it ought to have the supreme place. Religion ought to be the very life of education.

The greatest book that ever was written is the Bible. From that book the Christian nations of the earth derive their inspiration, and guidance in religion and morals. Destruction of the influence of that book would mean the end of modern civilization.

We contend then, that, in a scheme of education the Bible should have a place on account of its moral and religious value, for all students alike, whether or not they intend to take up theology as a profession. Our instruction in Christianity is not formal nor dogmatic in any narrow or special sense. It is Christological. It centres on the teachings and actions of the Master. We know from experience that this subject is the most important of all for true education. Authorities will agree that education means not only the acquisition of information, but the vivifying of the noblest aspirations that young minds are capable of. The longing to render true and lasting service to God and man.

We have made the statement that Jón Bjarnason Academy has a useful place to fill. We have also pointed out the two avenues along which that usefulness lies. Icelandic racial heritage and the Christian religion. Influenced by these two concepts we do our teaching, our constant aim being to pre-

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HIGH SCHOOL CORRESPONDENCE BRANCH:

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OUTPOST CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS:

Now incorporated with High School Correspondence Instruction Branch. Serves all children who are unable to take advantage of regular public school facilities. Total enrolment Feb. 1, 1925 to Sept. 30, 1930,—690. This branch extends its privileges to adults who may desire to avail themselves of the same.

TEACHER'S SUPERANNUATION:

The Teacher's Superannuation Commission was created by enactment at the last session of the Legislature of the Teacher's Superannuation Act 1930. There are about 15 applications for pensions to commence on January 1, 1931. Last year \$8,400,000 was paid out in teacher's salaries in the province. On a contributory basis of 4 per cent, teachers of the province would subscribe \$336,000 to the pension fund from July 1, 1930 to June 30, 1931.

EDUCATION OF SOLDIERS' DEPENDENT CHILDREN:

Saskatchewan was the first province of Canada to make provision by way of grants for the education of soldiers' dependent children. Since this scheme was instituted a total of 784 soldiers' dependent children have benefitted by the scheme, and a total of \$313,210.20 has been expended in grants.

Saskatchewan seeks to provide educational facilities for every man, woman and child within her boundaries who may desire to increase their knowledge and desire aid and instruction in so doing. pare and develop the young for lives of useful service in the country where they now live and where nearly all of them were born.

It is, as yet, too early to make a statement regarding the influence of our pupils in the larger and more important school of life. We have been sowing. God will take care of the harvest. And we, who have followed the career of a number of our graduates have noticed, with pride and thankfulness, many evidences that our humble efforts have not been in vain. We have had the satisfaction of seeing that the ideals inculcated in the Jón Bjarnason Academy have been a lasting guide. We hope for still more abundant evidences of this in the future.

"Our echoes roll from soul to soul and grow forever and forever." I cannot find any quotation that expresses more fittingly what we wish to accomplish. If our aims and aspirations outlined above contain, in public estimation, some practical and cultural values, may we hope for the moral and economic support of the Canadian public, in order that our "echoes" may grow and we be enabled to extend our sphere of activity for a greater service to our fellow men.



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"Nine-tenths of the calamities which have befallen the human race had no other origin than the union of high intelligence with low desires."—Macauley.

"Too frequently religious education has been regarded as a thing apart. Rather is it the natural and logical conclusion of all education, just as religion is the natural and complete expression of man's being."—Horne's Psychological Principles of Education.

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The Church College and Education

By REV. PRINCIPAL JOHN MACKAY, D.D., Manitoba College

The early Church was a fellowship of men and who lived in Christ. Every member was a herald of the Gospel and the Church swept round the Roman world. through the activities of ordinary men and women. soon ministerial functions began to be specialized and a regular ministry is singled out, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to lead the Church. These early leaders had been educated under Greek or Jewish auspices and had been remade in thought and life by the Gospel of Christ. But the second generation ministry needed regular training under Christian auspices and that this might be given, monastic schools sprang up throughout the Roman world. These were especially designed for the training of the ministry and they were the foundation of our modern Colleges and Universities. Slowly other departments in addition to the regular work of preaching and teaching were added and at first these were retained as ministries of the Church.

Gradually all but the regular ministerial functions were transferred to laymen, but training for these was still given under the auspices of the Church. Training for medicine, the law, etc., were given in separate departments within the Church school.

With the discovery of the modern scientific method and the vast developments of industry and commerce, other human interests and activities became the subject of specialized study. To such an extent have these interests and activities impressed themselves upon the thought of men that the purely religious interests have been pushed into the background, until today many of our Universities are divorced from all religious influence and training and some are positively hostile to religion in their emphasis. This is more especially true in Protestant countries and is giving serious concern to the leaders of the Church in these lands.

If it were possible to have as high a religious life and training in our homes, as we once had, this might not be such a serious matter, but the pressure of modern life makes it difficult to keep up family religion and the old careful training, so that children pass into the public school where religion is only referred to incidentally, if at all, through the high school and into the university where one can take his whole

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course without any contact with religious teaching or influence.

The result is that young people who come from Church homes too often lose all contact with the religion of their fathers before their university course is completed, if they have not been rendered positively hostile to it.

Our Universities have become so large and the courses they give so numerous, that one may often obtain a university degree without ever knowing from the work taken that there is such a thing as religion. This is a complete reversal of the original purpose of the College and University and its results are causing real concern to serious minded men and women who care for the future well-being of the race.

The triumphs of modern science have given us the railway, the steamship, the aeroplane, the telegraph, the telephone, the radio, the daily newspaper and a thousand other extensions of the range of human life. Time and space have largely disappeared as barriers between man and nations. The old human groupings, the home, the school and the Church have been faced by the shifting, restless tides of human life and have been profoundly modified. In short, we have changed from a static to a dynamic age and neither the Church nor the University has fully realized what has happened.

The Church has busied itself with its own pressing tasks of organization, administration and ministry, leaving the task of education to the State and other secular agencies. versities have carried on courses of investigation and instruction, without seeing clearly their inter-relations or significance within the large whole. Our young people are overwhelmed by the sheer wealth of knowledge at our disposal and flounder helplessly, getting an education without stopping to about think what education means for character and for life. But all this, instead of bringing us to an impasse where we must give up in despair, has brought us to a point where we may make a new beginning and enter an era spiritually rich beyond our wildest dreams. Modern education and the Christian Church both began in the attempt to transmit the experience of God in Jesus Christ to the whole world, and education and religion have both been revived and enriched whenever the race has returned to the simplicity which is in Jesus Christ.

Advancing knowledge and deepening religious life has again brought us face to face with the ultimate fact of human life, Jesus the Christ, and made it possible to evaluate and absorb that life as never before. In Him we have God revealed in human life and human life revealed in complete one-ness with God. "I am come" He said "that ye may have life and that ye may have it more abundantly" and part of that more

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abundant life is the ampler and more satisfying knowledge which the Universities are bringing to us. Yet, most of our Universities are giving an ever increasing number of unrelated courses, in which the very existence of religion, the one great unifier of all knowledge and all life is ignored.

These same Universities are too often staffed with men who know only their own subject and never think of it in relation to the whole of knowledge or the fullness of life. Young people who have never been taught to think clearly and who have not enough experience to realize the significance to life of what they are taught hear the deepest experience of their childhood set aside or questioned, and being unable to think out the problems raised for themselves often lose their early faith and lapse into agnosticism or atheism. These same young people become the teachers of the next generation, so that our Universities are full of blind leading the blind.

The profound unsettlement which takes place almost inevitably in the adolescent stage needs constant and sympathetic guidance from men and women who are themselves experts in the spiritual life and that guidance the State University, as at present organized, cannot give.

What we need above all else is religious training in which all our multiform courses are related to life in God. Such training would give meaning and purpose to every other course. The Scientist would see his field as a part of that wider knowledge which interprets God and transmits His fullness of life to man, the student of literature would find in it the story of man's age old quest for his other, fuller self and all the wealth of all the courses would be laid at the feet of the all pervading source of life and of the knowledge of life, and reverence and adoration would return again to the earth.

The Church has her own unquestioned sphere, as a fellowship of those who are slowly taking on the Christ-life, as a school of prayer and collective worship in which deeps of the soul are touched which lie beneath and above those regions to which knowledge can penetrate and where awe and reverence are born; as a revealer of life, fuller and more real than any the world can offer; as an agency which lays a wider, healing hand on human frailty and human sin.

But the University has its sphere also. It is not for the Church to lay a heavy hand on her, to set bounds to her quest for truth; but rather to contribute to those who teach and those who study her own rich and enriching experience of God. To the University belongs the task of spelling out and proclaiming the meaning of the multiforce manifestations of God in nature and in human life and to relate them all to the Church's deeper and more vital life in God. Thus the University

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will deal with the universe as a whole and not with isolated and unrelated fragments of knowledge, while the Church will take its store of knowledge to enrich her own and ever deepening experience.

The whole world is seeking, with eager hearts for the fruits of our science and our education. To give it education without religion is to work ruin, and it is the first task of the Church to so reach so-called Christian lands that all our education may be religious education and lead up ever more fully to life in God. When such education is exported to non-Christian lands, it will give to them the secret of whatever is great in our civilization and release for future enrichment whatever is good in theirs.

Many different attempts are being made to bring religion into the life of our Universities. The Student Christian Movement and the Y.M.C.A. have organized study groups in different University centres. While these have been helpful to large numbers of students, they do not carry the full force of the life of the Church into the University and are looked upon as another extra curricular activity for a select few, by a great majority of the students.

In recent years Chicago University and Yale University have followed the example of many of the older Universities by establishing beautiful chapels on their respective campuses, presided over by men of recognized scholarship and gifts of leadership. While this is helpful and is bound to have farreaching influence, these chapels and their ministers are not integrated into the daily life of the student and so can only make a limited contribution.

At least one Canadian Church has followed the habit of establishing a Theological College with a large residence, on every University campus. This gives visibility to Theology as a faculty of the University, but reaches only part of the students of that denomination.

The most common practise, especially in the United States, is to establish Preparatory Schools and Arts Colleges under distinctly Church control. In such an institute religious education can become an integral part of the curriculum and what is still better every part of the curriculum can be integrated with the life of the Church which is represented.

Where the staff is carefully selected and consists of men of sound scholarship and a deep religious life, men who win the respect and affection of their students, a still greater service can be performed; young people can be tided over the difficult period of adolescence and expanding knowledge without the loss of a real religious experience or a dimming of their childhood's faith.

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The Cultural Value of Icelandic

By WATSON KIRKCONNELL

Popular critics of our provincial system of education sometimes make acrimonious attacks upon the inclusion of Icelandic studies in the curricula of our high schools and colleges. This status, they say, was given to Icelandic as a concession to the vanity of an active racial minority some years ago; it is not justified by any inherent excellence or utility in the language itself; and as a matter of fact the prescribed courses have already fallen into well-deserved neglect.

What shall we say to these aspersions upon the educational value of Icelandic? How shall we, who have faith in it, give reasoned justification for that faith?

To begin with, anyone who has a wide knowledge of language studies in general will realize the disciplinary value of so rational and straightforward an inflected speech. So far as concerns the sharpening of the linguistic sense and the acquisition of copious and precise diction through the interrelating of two distinct tongues, there is no advantage in German, French, or Latin studies that cannot be derived with like effectiveness from class-work in Icelandic.

Language study must, however, go farther than that, and must serve some end beyond itself that ministers more fully and directly to life. So considered, Icelandic cannot open doors for commerce, as Spanish does; nor for science, as does German; nor for both, as with French. It is today the speech of a nation with one-third the population of Winnipeg, lying far off the beaten tracks of the world's trade and almost devoid of industries and international relationships. To the hard-minded utilitarian, the Philistine with a monetary scale of values, the deliberate cultivation of such a language must seem a piece of egregious folly.

Nevertheless there is much in life that is undreamt of in the philosophies of commerce and applied science. In all ages there have been those to whom the economic activities of man are not the end of existence but the mere animal basis for a richer and more significant growth of mind and spirit. To such persons, a new language may offer a key to some strange and inspiring tradition in human experience, opening doors upon a fuller comprehension of their own destinies in time and space.

The Icelandic language is one of the noblest of these keys. By it we unlock one of the great treasure-houses of the world's literature—a treasury enclosing a rich poetic inheritance from

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Einar Benediktsson back to the poetic Edda, as well as the incomparable prose narratives of the Saga age. And in these we may discover elements of the highest importance in the cultural growth of the individual.

The first is an almost unparalleled sense of form in poetry. In a day when English poems all too often involve the formlessness of free verse or the flabbiness of simple metres lazily employed, there is a bracing challenge in the rigors of Icelandic prosody. The ancient alliterative measures were strict enough. but the blending of Celtic and Teutonic modes by the court poets made their poetic technique exacting to the point where the trifling bungler was ruled out and even the most skilful artist had to labor strenuously. Since the Middle Ages, similar blending of strict alliterative principles with the laxer modes of Modern Europe has made it clear that the old spirit of craftmanship lives on, that the Icelandic poet does not regard his calling as an amusement for careless emotionality but rather as a craft calling for consummate skill and tireless Such a tradition often suffers from the defects of its own qualities, strangling itself with the bonds that it assumes; but its very austerity is an inspiring and abiding rebuke to every age of artistic laxity.

Even more important is the philosophy of life implicit in the epic poetry and in the sagas. As Icelandic prosody might put iron into our verses, so the Old Norse ideals might put iron into our characters; for the old literature of Iceland is the finest embodiment of the primitive ethos of the Nordic peoples, the working faith of the great blond races of the North.

It was a pagan creed, facing the evils of existence with pessimistic eves and magnificent courage. It envisaged universe in which the Great Gods of virtue and wisdom would at last die in apocalyptic overthrow at the hands of the powers of darkness; yet it prescribed as the brightest fate of heroic souls in an afterlife the privilege of then perishing a second time at the side of the defeated gods. Life might be tragic; the very world, with all its values of the spirit, doomed to ultimate extinction; but the way of a man was to live manlike, to make no compromise with things evil or base. to assert freedom of his soul against all the forces of pain and death and destiny. At a time when the solvents of science have destroyed so much that once sustained us, there is today no less a place for that calm integrity of spirit that will take "a full look at the worst" and then fearlessly maintain its inmost citadels unsurrendered in despite of time and fate.

Icelandic studies may be more than a mere cultural discipline; they may contribute to the positive exaltation of those who pass through them into that stern high world where our forefathers lived and died with fearless eyes and undefeated hearts.

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The Icelandic Parliament (Althing) and the Millennial Celebration of 1930

By DR. SVEINBJORN JOHNSON

Professor of Law and Legal Counsel of the University of Illinois; A.B., A.M., LL.B., University of North Dakota; LL.D. University of Iceland.

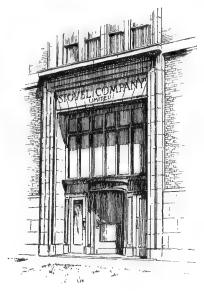
The settlement of Iceland began about the year 874 A.D. The island when discovered was uninhabited. While the record shows that some priests from Ireland (Culdee) had lived in Iceland for a time, they left either shortly before or very shortly after the settlement commenced.

During the period between 860 and 872 Harald the Fairhaired of Norway had been engaged in the bitter and bloody task of subduing all of that country under his personal rule. His undertaking approximated that of Alfred the Great England. The conquest was successful, but the cost was great, for many of the best men of Norway, including petty kings and princes, departed and took up their abode in Ireland, Scotland, Normandy and on various islands in the Atlantic. It is well known that in the ninth century the Vikings established themselves as kings over large areas of Scotland and of Ireland. It is equally well established that the native population rebelled against and killed them, or drove them from the country. The settlers of Iceland came from Scandinavia and also from Ireland and Scotland whence they were driven, and the interven-They brought natives as wives and others as ing islands. Except for this admixture of Scotch and Celtic blood slaves. the original settlers were mainly of Norwegian descent.

By 930 the settlement of Iceland seems to have been virtually complete. Before that time, however, the leaders had seen the need of some sort of governmental organization. Indeed, the records indicate that it was not very long after the first settlers arrived that local things sprang up, where rules of conduct were administered and judgments rendered in controversies between individuals. Of course, to begin with, these bodies were little more than tribunals of arbitration to whom controversies could be submitted, if the parties so desired.

All civil government in Iceland during the period of the Commonwealth (930—1262) had its roots in certain pagan practices. The first attempt at organizing society centered around the pagan temple, called hof in the Sagas. The pro-

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prietor of the temple was called a *godi*, and it naturally resulted that these men became the community leaders, and the *hof* a community meeting place. These chiefs undertook to adjust disputes, and they became the cornerstone of the new state.

The Althing, or national parliament, was founded in 930 and is the oldest legislative assembly in the world. In one respect this body occupies a unique place in the development of the State, for unlike the moots in other countries, which slowly and laboriously evolved into national organizations, the Icelandic Althing was really founded by men who deliberately set out to build a governmental structure. The island had been settled less than sixty years before; while there had been local things to take care of local needs, there had not probably been a national body or thing until 930, although there is some controversy on this point. Careful preparations and intensive study preceded the organization of the Althing. Like the American republic in 1789, the Icelandic structure sprang almost full-blown from the brains of its founders.



Divine Service Preceding the opening of the Icelandic Parliamentary Celebration 1930, conducted by Bishop Jon Helgason, D.D., in Almannagja

One of the great men of Iceland went to Norway about the year 927, where he spent three years studying the Norwegian legal system; in the meantime his foster-brother travelled on horseback over Iceland in search of a suitable place for the national body to convene and transact the public business. When the law-giver, Úlfljót, returned with a complete code of laws and a scheme for the organization of a national government, he found that his foster-brother had located the meeting place of the Althing on a picturesque plain in the southern part of Iceland, which is known in history as

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Thingvellir. On this plain the national assembly met until 1798, when the Althing moved from the plains to the city of Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland. In the latter place it meets today.

It is not strange that even up to the present time there are distinguished men in Iceland who believe that a national assembly should meet on that grandly picturesque and historic spot. Undoubtedly the actual process of lawmaking can better take place in the comfortable Parliament House in Revkjavik: but it is a debatable question whether a national gathering at Thingvellir, for a few days annually, for the discussion national problems might not be fruitful of wholesome results, helpful in fostering a national consciousness and in keeping alive popular interest in the government, as well as a means of imparting information concerning public sentiment to public officials. Public opinion in Iceland has decidedly limited vehicles of expression; most newspapers are seemingly personal, group, or party organs; at any rate, they seem intensely partisan. Beyond a doubt Iceland has lost a great national institution in giving up the meeting at Thingvellir, just as the Greeks lost something when the Olympic games abandoned.

The founders of the Icelandic commonwealth took a long step in advance of contemporary Europe when they separated the lawmaking from the judicial function. There is some dispute among the authorities whether the separation existed from the beginning, or whether it was effected about 965. event, it is clear that by 965 the separation had been completely brought about and one body decided controversies and another tribunal made the laws. It is my personal view, that the separation dates from 965, for one reason, because in Norway, from which the Icelandic law-giver received the main inspiration for his system, the legislative and the judicial power were combined as one function in Lögrétta. This latter term, is therefore a Norwegian importation, and it is probable that the function was, in the main, borrowed with the name. 965 experience had demonstrated the evils of combining the functions in one body.

Space does not permit an extended description of the structure and functioning of the Althing. At one time the island was divided into twelve things, and there were three godords in each thing, it resulting that the godis were at once the religious and political leaders in the community. It is not, however, proper to speak of the godord as an office; it is rather in the nature of a property, and transferable by the holder.

Thirty-six men (godis) originally constituted the law-making membership of the Althing, i.e. Lögrétta, together with



the law-speaker. The law-speaker, usually, but not necessarily a godi, was its president. These law-makers also named one judge each for the Althing court (thirty-six) as originally organized. This was the highest court in the land.



Pageant, Staged at Thingvellir 1930, Depicting the Election of Lawman at the same place in 930

Later the country was divided into four quarters with definite geographical boundaries; the ordinary godord had no fixed boundaries. In each quarter there were three things, except in the northern quarter, where there were four. The balance, however, was maintained in the Althing, so that the northern quarter did not outweigh any other quarter in point of influence.

In about 1004 the Fifth Court was established. came, in reality, the Supreme Court of Iceland. Appeals did not lie to the court in the ordinary sense with which we are familiar today: it had original jurisdiction in certain cases. It consisted of forty-eight judges, twelve more than the membership in the Althing court of old. However, thirty-six of the twelve decided all cases, as each litigant had the right to challenge six men: in fact, if either side neglected to challenge six a mis-trial resulted. After this date (1004) each member of Lögrétta had the right to name two counsellors who sat with The membership of Lögrétta thus really rose to one hundred and fourty-four men. Just when these two men were assigned to each godi is not altogether clear. It has sometimes been asserted that they were members from the very beginning. but it seems probable that they were added later, partly in response to the public demand that the base of representation be broadened, and also in order to counteract the concentration of power in the hands of the comparatively few godis.

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It is not very important just on what date each of these changes took place. It is important, however that every change indicates a distinct step towards a more popular and more representative system of government, whereas in contemporary Europe the movement was in precisely the opposite direction.*

To summarize, we may correctly say that the cornerstone of the Icelandic Commonwealth, as we say of the United States and Canada today, was the individual himself. were slaves, it is true, but there were no classes; all persons, excepting slaves, were equal before the law; slavery soon disappeared, and the ex-bondman, or his descendants, in many instances became the head of the corner. Individuals attached themselves and separated themselves from a godi at will; if he became officious, oppressive or arrogant, he soon lost followers, who, by attaching themselves to another godi. "elected" another representative. Save for the one fundamental defect, the absence of an executive, which was the cause of the downfall of the commonwealth, the government was sufficient unto the times, and was representative of and responsive to an enlightened public will.

"Any attempt to describe the Millennial Celebration, June 26-28, 1930, is foredoomed to failure.* The impressions of the visitor—many bewilderingly thrilling, all unusual and intense—crowded the consciousness, as snowflakes sometimes fill the sky, until the onlooker felt himself nearly suffocated in a whirlwind of sensations. They include the divine services conducted by the Bishop of Iceland, the march to Lögberg, the Rock of Law, headed by the King of Denmark and his Queen, followed by the Crown Prince of Sweden, and the official delegations of all the great European powers, States of America, and Canada; the unforgettable opening address of the President of the Althing at Lögberg; the signing of a treaty by Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Iceland pledging differences, regardless of their nature. that henceforth all should be settled by peaceful arbitration, an agreement unique in international relations and a step in the direction of permanent peace more significant than any taken since the organization of the League of Nations; and lastly, the symbolic delivery by representatives of the United States of America of a statue of Leif Eriksson, and an announcement by a representative of

^{*)} Pioneers of Freedom, Chaps. 3 and 4. Sveinbjorn Johnson, Stratford Press, Boston, U.S.A.

Fálkinn, June 21, 1930, p. 20. V. P. Gislason.

^{**)} St. Nicholas, November, 1930, p. 76; an article by Sveinbjorn Johnson.

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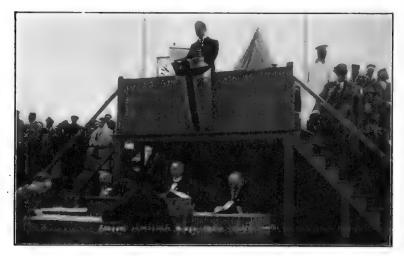
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Canada that a gift would be forthcoming from the Dominion, the nature of which was not disclosed.

"For several days Reykjavik looked like a beleaguered city; for in its harbor lay the war-ships of many nations, among them the second largest battleship afloat, the *Rodney* of the British fleet. The hotel at Thingvellir, a frame building, is appropriately named Valhöll, or Valhalla. Here the representatives and official delegates of the different countries were comfortably housed and fed.



Asgeir Asgeirsson chairman of the Icelandic Parliamentary Celebration Delivering the Official Address at Logberg, 1930

"At the historic place of Thingvellir, the road dropped down a slope between high and rocky walls upon either side. It is useless to try to describe the extraordinary aspect of nature in that unusual place. Only God and elemental fire could create the marvels that meet the eye in this place of Olympic grandeur.

"On the plain itself, lay the improvised cities, thousands upon thousands of gleaming white tents in which the visitors were housed. Water-pipes had been laid so that excellent running water was everywhere available. The ponies, which brought the pepole from all parts of the island, were grazing here and there in uncounted numbers. They were plump, well fed and seemingly in the very pink of condition.

"The plains of the Althing lie about thirty miles from Reykjavik. Every precaution was taken against accident or disorder. Thousands of trips were made back and forth dur-

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ing the three days of the celebration without a single accident in which anybody was seriously injured. Although over fifty thousand people milled back and forth on the Plains during the exciting events the chief of police informed the writer that it had not been necessary to make a single arrest. He also said that there had been no signs of intoxication or of the excessive use of intoxicants during the celebration. This was none the less impressive because of the interesting fact that the Chief, who had charge of the police force, was a Chicago policeman on leave of absence. Whatever the difficulty which Chicago may have in governing itself, one of her policemen proved an efficient head of the police force of Reykjavik, Iceland.

"To be admired also was the national exhibit of arts and industry; the books, manuscripts, and relics in the national library and museum; and we stood in silent and awed wonder before the exquisitely beautiful conceptions of the sculptor, Einar Jónsson, whose genius the world will one day applaud as it now does that of Rodin and of Bertel Thorwaldsen. Rich in imaginative and interpretive talent, Einar Jónsson is too poor to put his creations into marble or bronze. But the Icelandic Government has built a museum where they will remain, until some person of means devotes part of a fortune to the perpetuation of some of the finest art of the age."



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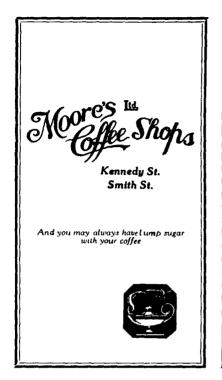
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